(iv) The present analog microwave link between Agartala to Silchar is planned to be replaced by digital media to further improve the STD service.

B. BIRBHUM : The following development activities have been planned during 97-98.

(i) Total capacity expansion by 5000 lines.

(ii) Provision of 4500 new telephone connections.

(iii) Provision of 550 village public telephones.

(iv) Provision of 150 STD PCOs and 80 local PCOs.

(v) Commissioning of 8 new telephone exchanges.

(vi) Extension of STD facility to 11 more exchanges through reliable media.

Telecast of Matches at DD

358. DR. RAM CHANDRA DOME : Will the Minister of INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING be pleased to state :

(a) whether Doordarshan is giving less importance to telecast football and Hockey matches of the country as well as international matches;

(b) if so, the reasons therefor; and

(c) the steps to be taken to allot more time to telecast these matches ?

THE MINISTER OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING (SHRI S. JAIPAL REDDY) : (a) to (c) It is Doordarshan's endeavour to telecast all major National and International sporting events including hockey and football matches where-ever telecast rights are made available to it. As a result of signing an agreement with the Indian Hockey Federation (IHF) and acquiring telecast rights, Doordarshan has been able to telecast almost all major hockey matches/tournaments played in the country in the recent past. Earnest efforts are being made by Doordarshan to sign similar agreements with All India Football Federation (AIFF) and other Sports Associations.

Gauge Conversion

359. SHRI UDDHAB BARMAN : Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state :

(a) the names and length of the narrow/metre gauge sections under Northeast Frontier Railway converted into broad-gauge so far;

(b) whether all the converted lines gets clearance for running of goods and passenger trains;

(c) if so, the details thereof;

(d) the names of those sections where passenger as well as goods trains have started plying;

(e) whether the Government are considering for introduction of passenger services from those section to other parts of the country; and

(f) if so, the details thereof ?

THE MINISTER OF RAILWAYS (SHRI RAM VILAS PASVAN) : (a) (i) Guwahati–Dibrugarh (559 kms.)

(ii) Tinsukhia–Lekhapani (64 kms.)

(iii) Chaparmukh–Haibergaon (25 kms.)

(b) Yes, Sir

(c) and (d) Goods trains are running on all the above converted sections. But Passenger trains are running only cn Guwahati–Dibrugarh and Chaparmukh–Haibergaon sections.

(e) Yes, Sir.

(f)1. 4055/4056 Delhi–Dimapur Brahmaputra Mail has been extended to Dibrugarh Town/Tinsukia.

2. 2423/2424 Guwahati Rajdhani will also be extended to Dibrugarh Town once a week.

3. 5659/5660 Howrah–Guwahati Kamrup Express will be extended to Dibrugarh Town.

4. An overnight service will be introduced between Guwahati and Tinsukia.

Attachment of AC-II Coaches with Howrah–Chennai Mail

360. SHRI RUP CHAND MURMU : Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Government propose to increase AC-2 coaches with Howrah-Chennai Mail;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether it is a fact that passengers are not getting more accommodation due to less number of quota allotted to and from Calcutta in the AC-2 class;

(d) if so, whether the Government are going to fulfill

the demand by attaching AC-3 coach with this train and convert the rake into air-brakes;

(e) if so, the details thereof; and

(f) if not, the reasons therefore ?

THE MINISTER OF RAILWAYS (SHRI RAM VILAS PASWAN) : (a) and (b) An additional A.C. 2-Tier Sleeper coach is being provided on 6003/6004 Mail from 1.8.97.

(c) Few passengers remain on waiting list.

(d) to (f) Conversion of long distance trains into air-brake and deployment of AC 3-tier sleeper coaches are being done in a phased manner. Conversion of 6003/6004 Mail into air-brake and deployment of A.C. 3-tier sleeper on this train will also be considered alongwith similar demands in later years.

Telephone Bills

361. SHRI RAMESHWAR PATIDAR :
SHRI SATYAJITSINH DULIPSINH GAEKWAD :

Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Government are aware that Rent Rebate and RNP charges and surcharges waived by GM (North) MTNL during 1995-96 on account of dead telephones have not been adjusted in Telephone Bills till date;

(b) if so, the reasons therefor and the remedial steps proposed to be taken in regard thereto; and

(c) the reasons for adding the amount of REDU, FRECAL in the telephone bills for the period when the phone was lying dead for months together ?

THE MINISTER OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI BENI PRASAD VARMA) : (a) As per records, no rent rebate is pending. Some cases of RNP charge and surcharge waived are pending for adjustment.

(b) As mentioned above, no rent rebate case is pending. Regarding RNP charges & surcharges waived, only a few cases are pending. In these cases either a declaration from the subscriber or original bill is requested for stamping with a view to safeguarding the Government revenue. The efforts are being made to clear these cases also within one month.

(c) The free calls are permitted for each Bi-monthly Billing Cycle. Prorata free calls for the period of rebate are reduced from the total free calls or in other words amount on account of these free calls is reduced from the amount of rental rebate allowed.

Replacement of Railway Tracks

362. SHRI T. GOVINDAN : Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Government are aware of the pathetic condition of the outdated and very old rail tracks causing frequent derailing and accidents of trains between Kasaragod and Cannanore sector in Kerala; and

(b) if so, the steps taken by the Government to replace such tracks ?

THE MINISTER OF RAILWAYS (SHRI RAM VILAS PASWAN) : (a) In the past three years there was no accident due to track defects in Cannanore-Kasaragod section. This section is 85.6 km in length and the track consists of 90R rails laid on CST-9 sleepers. The rails have carried a total GMT of 164 only as against the safe limit of 300.

(b) However on condition basis, 34 km. length of rail renewals and 31 km sleeper renewals have been sanctioned. During 1997-98, 17 kms of rails and sleepers are planned for renewal.

Telephone service in Dharwad District

363. SHRI VIJAY SANKESHWAR : Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state :

(a) the number of villages which have been provided telephone facility and the villages not connected with telephone service in Dharwad district of Karnataka;

(b) whether there is any proposal for expansion of communication services in this district; and

(c) if so, the details thereof ?

THE MINISTER OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI BENI PRASAD VARMA) : (a) 1221 Nos. of villages have been provided telephone facility and 123 Nos. of villages are without telephone facility in Dharwad District of Karnataka.

(b) Yes, Sir.

(c) The remaining 123 villages are planned to be provided with telephone facility during the current financial year.